



Newsletter

FROM THE DIRECTOR

I know that our former program name, West Africa Regional Program (WARP), was a favorite amongst many but I assure you we will continue our excellent work and even do better under our new name, USAID West Africa (USAID/WA). We are late in getting this newsletter out; I apologize and promise to keep the quarterly schedule from now on. Significant events which are not too late to report have occurred during the past six months. These include the opening of the Trade Hub in Dakar; the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding for capacity building with the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea; the launching of the Trans Saharan Counter Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI) in Niger and Chad; the starting of new public-private alliances; the completion of significant workshops and conferences such as the ECOWAS sponsored Avian Influenza (AI) conference for Technical staff and Ministers in Abuja, Nigeria, to adopt a common regional framework for preventing and controlling the spread of (AI) in the region etc..

Meet our new staff members: We now have a Deputy Director in the person of Felix N. Awantang. Other new staff include Joel Sandefur-Regional Legal Advisor, Patrick Kollars-Contracts Officer, Chris Barratt-Health Program Team Leader, and Melissa Knight-Agriculture Team Leader. James Browder, our former acting Health Team Leader has moved on with his family to the USAID Mission in Ethiopia as has our Senegal-based Food for Peace (FFP) officer Kevin Sturr to Zimbabwe. Our satellite office in the Dakar Mission, which includes a very active Food for Peace program, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), and Regional Legal Advisor Idris Diaz, is fully operational.

I have visited the Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, Togo and Dakar Missions during the past months to brief our Ambassadors and to meet with our counterparts. I will try to visit our remaining client Missions during the next couple of months. Many Missions have inquired about the timing of the Regional Advisory Board meeting that we hold annually to discuss our strategy and solicit feedback from our client Missions. I will definitely hold one but am waiting till some of the work on new directions is finalized. Enjoy reading the newsletter and please give us feedback to make improvements that will make this newsletter more useful to you.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT!

A Unique Partnership

On April 11, 2006, Ambassador Randall Tobias, who is the new U.S. State Department Director of Foreign Assistance as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development's Administrator, joined President Teodoro Obiang of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in signing an agreement to establish a Social Development Fund, which will support projects in the areas of health, education, women's affairs and environment.



Signing of MOU in Washington

What is unique about the Fund is that, while USAID is providing the expertise to design and manage the programs, the financial resources are all from the Equato-Guinean government. In what Administrator Tobias called a "landmark agreement", Equatorial Guinea is giving \$15 million to USAID to provide technical assistance to support the Fund. The USAID/West Africa Mission will manage the \$15 million three-year Technical Support Program (TSP), which will also build capacity and foster transparency and accountability in the design, implementation, and evaluation of social needs projects in Equatorial Guinea.

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USAID-Sponsored ECOWAS Avian Flu Conference

USAID/West Africa sponsored the technical meetings of the recently held ECOWAS Technical Experts and Ministerial Meetings in Abuja, Nigeria on June 20-23, 2006. The objective of the meetings was to adopt a common technical framework for avian influenza (AI) control, mitigation and contingency planning in ECOWAS countries and other states in the region (Cameroon, Chad, and Mauritania) through three principal mechanisms: 1) a technical framework to guide countries in generating their own action plans to counter AI; 2) a common strategy for communicating essential AI information among states and to the public; and 3) plans to establish a regional emergency fund to support AI activities from country action plans. The meetings were attended by 13 of the 15 ECOWAS member states, as well as Mauritania and Chad. An estimated 100 to 200 individuals from member states, bilateral and international organizations, and staff from USDA-Senegal, USAID/West Africa, and US Embassy-Abuja also participated in the meetings. The ECOWAS forum on AI has contributed to moving participating states towards improved coordination and harmonization of technical approaches to AI in the region. The working papers from this conference will be formally presented to ECOWAS and other participating Heads of State in December 2006 for official adoption.

Greater Trade Competitiveness

Export Agricultural Products

At the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum in June in Washington, DC, Dr. Shawn Robertson organized a session entitled "Agricultural Exports: to the US and South-South." Panelists included Undersecretary of Agriculture for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services J.B. Penn and Angolan Minister of Commerce Joaquim Muafumba. Dr. Robertson is the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA/APHIS) Advisor, working as part of the USAID/West Africa Trade and Investment Team, and is based in Accra.

The AGOA session highlighted the requirements and opportunities for African agricultural exports under AGOA, and demonstrated how U.S. technical assistance to build phytosanitary management capacity has increased agricultural South/South trade within Africa, for example, between Ivory Coast and South Africa for fresh fruits. Dr. Robertson also reported on the potential for using irradiation as a blanket treatment for all insect pests. Commenting during the session, Undersecretary Penn said that "by working together, we can create economic growth in Africa, making it a powerful engine for trade and investment in the 21st century."

Reproductive Health, Nutrition, Child Survival and HIV/AIDS

USAID Support to the Global Fund To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) Intensifies

USAID/West Africa's ongoing efforts to support the largest fund for the three diseases in the region have moved into the implementation phase. A workshop for all Francophone countries receiving Global Fund grants in Africa, with the exception of Rwanda, was held in January 16-20 in Accra. The workshop assisted countries which received Round Five grants in developing a Procurement and Supply Management (PSM) Plan, required for all grants. Signing of over \$200 million in grants was enhanced by the workshop, with about \$115 million of programmed for West Africa. Partners such as Global Fund, WHO and UNICEF met to coordinate follow-up on efforts to support PSM in West Africa, including support to two West African institutions, the Center for Superior Studies Administration and Governance (CESAG) and the Public Health Research Institute (IRSP).

Young Professional Interns Graduate

The West Africa Health Organization (WAHO) held a ceremony at its headquarters in Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, on January 27, 2006, to mark the graduation of the first cohort of six young professionals to complete the USAID/West Africa-supported Young Professionals' Internship Program (YPIP). The interns were from Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, and Senegal. During the one year program, which aims to produce a cadre of young public health professionals in the West African region who are bilingual, computer literate, and knowledgeable in management issues, the interns spent about 70 percent of their time with health organizations in various countries, where they gained hands-on experience in the public health area of their choice (reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, malaria, nutrition). They also spent two weeks with the Ministry of Health in their respective placement countries. The remaining time was spent at the WAHO offices, where the interns received intensive language and computer training as well as an orientation to public health management issues. The next cohort of ten begins orientation this month in Bobo Dioulasso.

USAID/West Africa Develops Innovative Community Development Program for Sao Tome and Principe

USAID/West Africa recently added Sao Tome and Principe as one of several new countries to benefit from its health project, Action for West Africa Region (AWARE). A multi-sectoral team from USAID/West Africa, USAID/Washington, and AWARE-RH visited Sao Tome and Principe from February 28 to March 7, 2006, to conduct an assessment and design

interventions to support community mobilization for increased access to quality and essential health services. Activities will begin in the next quarter. A second design team made up of USAID/West Africa and AWARE-HIV/AIDS staff will visit the islands, designing projects for HIV/AIDS activities to be funded by USAID/West Africa's Ambassadors' AIDS Fund.

USAID/West Africa Launches Key Regional Support for Prevention and Treatment of Obstetric Fistula

Obstetric fistula is a serious problem in most of the countries covered by USAID/West Africa. A joint team from USAID/West Africa, UNFPA/New York, and AWARE-RH visited Mali and Niger from January 23 to February 3 to assess fistula activities in both countries and to identify areas of possible USAID/West Africa support for fistula activities. The areas identified included strengthening of fistula training capabilities, support for fistula repair equipment, and support of the costs of fistula repairs. Implementation of planned interventions will begin in April 2006, in conjunction with USAID/Mali.

Training of Community Health Workers to Provide Care for Childhood Illnesses at Home:

Acute respiratory infections (ARIs) are one of the main causes of mortality in children. Senegal and Nepal have successfully trained community health workers to manage non-complicated acute respiratory infections. USAID/West Africa's implementing partner, AWARE-RH, in collaboration with WHO/AFRO, WHO/Niger, and UNICEF/Niger have begun supporting the replication of this model in the Madarounfa District in Niger. Following assessment and orientation visits, a team of 10 Health Officers from Integrated Health Posts were trained as trainers. These trainers will begin training 75 community-level health workers in May 2006, after which children living in Madarounfa district will have access to treatment for ARIs and malaria in communities closer to home.

Community-based Health Financing Scheme Brings Promise of Better Health Care to Members of Women's Cooperatives in Niger:

The commune of Loga, Dosso District, Niger, is one of the poorest in the world, yet women here have joined forces with USAID/West Africa's AWARE-RH Project and the Belgian Cooperation to improve their lives with a combination of income-generation and subsidized medical care initiatives. More than 30 women's cooperative groups are working to increase household income, with the assistance of the Dosso Women's Project to Increase Income (ARMFD). Even when income levels increased, the women realized that a single medical emergency could wipe out their savings. With support from the AWARE-RH project, a community health financing scheme, the Loga Women's Mutual

Health Organization, was launched on March 30, 2006. Now subscribers pay a small amount yearly for complete coverage of most health conditions, providing them with access to better health while leaving more of their income to provide for other basic needs for their families.

Caravan to Fight Stigma and Discrimination Against People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)

A USAID/West Africa-supported caravan of religious leaders and media, aiming to fight stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS in West Africa, was launched in Nouakchott, Mauritania on November 4, 2005. It ended in Abuja, Nigeria, on December 4, 2005, arriving in time to coincide with the launch of the important International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (ICASA). The Cross-border Caravan, featured in the March-April issue of USAID's *Front Lines* publication, went through Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Nigeria, mobilizing religious leaders of all faiths and other people to talk about the disease, which affects millions of people throughout the region. By the end of the route, 1,500 religious leaders had been contacted and trained on advocacy and consciousness-raising methods and techniques. Another 30,000 people participated in over 20 events at the various Caravan stops. According to Imam Sani Isah of Nigeria, "As religious leaders, the synergy of the Caravan has not only redoubled our spirit of collaboration, but it has also increased our expectations for a more effective fight against HIV/AIDS in general, and against stigma toward people living with HIV and AIDS in particular." The Caravan was jointly organized by the Action for West Africa Region (AWARE)-HIV/AIDS project, funded by USAID/West Africa, the Regional Network of Religious Leaders, the National AIDS Control Programs (NACPs) in the six countries; and other groups, including partners funded by USAID bilateral missions.

PAST ACTIVITIES

- June 5-9: Workshop on Lessons learned from implementation of National Health Accounts Surveys (Bamako)
- June 12-17: Regional Workshop on IUD skills Standardization for Anglophone countries (Accra)
- June 13-16: Workshop on Strengthening the Capacity of Journalists to Report on Maternal and Neonatal Health (MNH) Issues (Dakar)
- July 3-14: Regional Francophone Workshop on Supply Chain Management for Global Fund Grant Programs (Dakar)

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- August 21-25: Regional Workshop on Quantification for Commodity Security (Dakar)

- August 28-Sept 1: Workshop on Advocacy Techniques for MNH for Technical Leadership Institutions (Dakar)

Food Security, Natural Resources Management & Agriculture

Adding Value to Selected Commodities

Processing and transformation are key to the USAID/West Africa funded sorghum and millet marketing and processing project with INTSORMIL in four countries because of their contribution to improving nutrition as well as generating income. During the December 14-15, 2005 workshop in Senegal, representative processors proudly displayed a range of products including couscous, flour, grits, and yogurt containing up to 40 percent steamed millet. The



Selected West African commodities transformed into a range of processed food products

demand for the delicious Jaboot yogurt in Senegal far exceeds the supply, which is limited by the inadequate supply of quality millet from farmers.

The short shelf lives of packaged products was also identified as a constraint to market expansion and the project is working with technologists in the U.S. and South Africa to improve this constraint. The project is also facilitating franchising arrangements between the best processor in Senegal for the Jaboot yogurt and MAM Cocktail in Mali.

African Market Garden

The Global Development Alliance (GDA) ICRISAT-implemented AMG project has disseminated about 330 low-cost, low-pressure drip irrigation systems to vegetable and fruit growers in Burkina Faso and Ghana. Many farmers are quite enthusiastic with the results and want to move up to the more expensive, pressurized drip irrigation systems for bigger areas. This is because they produced so many vegetables and fruit of better quality that, within a year, many were able to recover the cost of the investments in the water reservoir. Other donors are picking up on ICRISAT's approach to disseminating the drip irrigation technology.

Major events/accomplishments

Meeting on Cotton – Senior representatives met in Cotonou, Benin from January 25 - 26 to consult on the new U.S. Government sponsored West Africa Cotton Improvement Program (WACIP). The purpose of the WACIP is to improve the yields and incomes of cotton producers in the countries of Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mali (C-4) plus Senegal. A key recommendation from the meeting is the need for rapid implementation of the program which is expected to benefit millions of cotton producers and processors in West Africa. Participants included technical leaders from the C-4 countries and Senegal; representatives from regional organizations – the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WE CARD), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), and the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS); private organizations – Network of Farmers and Agricultural Producers Organizations in West Africa (ROPPA), Inter-professional Cotton Association (AIC); and representatives from the (USAID), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the American National Cotton Council (NCC).

PAST ACTIVITIES

- February 23-24 2006 - The West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WE CARD) consultation meeting in Dakar with donors and regional partners.
- March 3-6 - The African Cashew Alliance; First steering committee meeting; Guinea Bissau
- March 27-31- 40th CILSS Council of Ministers in Guinea Bissau where Ministers agreed to adopt two important regional conventions: 1. Common bio-safety regulation; 2. Common regulation for conventional and transgenic seeds
- April 24 -28 - CORAF/WE CARD General Assembly meeting in Banjul, The Gambia
- Training - About 1,000 farmers trained in Mali by Ministry of Agriculture extension field staff in 20 locations between December, 2005 and March, 2006, on the management of emergency outbreak pests, including locusts and grasshoppers
- May 8-12 - Phase I training workshop on business plans development for the seeds alliance; Bamako, Mali
- June 7-8 - Biotech workshop for cotton farmers of Burkina Faso and Mali by INSAH; Sikasso, Mali
- June 9-13 - Africa Fertilizer Summit; Abuja, Nigeria

Regional Conflict Mitigation and Governance

The Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Initiative TSCTI): USAID's mandate under this new initiative is to combat terrorism by addressing its root causes in a development context; looking at such issues as unemployment, poverty and lack of social infrastructure. Awards have been completed to begin initial programming in Niger focusing on youth employment and advocacy and the reintegration of former combatants, and in Chad programs to assist the National Assembly in budgetary training and provide training in leadership and conflict mitigation. In addition the program manager for Chad started his assignment.

Conflict Early Warning: Virtual Research Associates successfully installed the first module of the computerized conflict early warning system (now called ECOWARN) along with relevant training. This module sets the parameters and indicators for the system. These indicators will be periodically refined and revised.

The West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) continued to strengthen its institutional capacity as the primary input source for the ECOWARN system. Staff was recruited for various positions. WANEP Zonal Coordinators were recruited for the four Zones (Banjul, Cotonou, Monrovia and Ouagadougou).

Antiretroviral (ARV) Study by WAHO: The West African Health Organization has drafted the ARV Management - a guide for ECOWAS policy, which will serve as a basis for discussion by ECOWAS member states in dealing with ARV distribution and other ARV management issues.

The Casamance: Concern Universal's program of Economic Stability and Social Unity (ESSU) in the Western Division of the Gambia, bordering the Casamance, through the efforts of the Saint Joseph Family Farm (SJFF) in Bwiam District reports the return and re-absorption of 230 school children from the Casamance. These were made up of 120 girls and 110 boys. Recent conflicts in the Casamance seriously impacted on the southern border and led to our conflict mitigating partner, ADRA/Guinea Bissau not being able to complete final impact evaluation of the USAID/WA field projects. This was because the roads to the projects were mined by the radical MFDC soldiers.

Sierra Leone-Liberia-Guinea border area: During the last quarter Na Wi Pot continued to sustain and expand its contributions to peace-building activities in the Kailahun District of Sierra Leone. Na Wi Pot in the period produced 64 episodes of the peace building

soap Opera known as "Unity Boat", for an audience of 19,006.

The Computer Frontiers International program to assist Civil Society Groups in the Mano River Union Countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea Conakry and Liberia has begun the installation of computer hardware and software and related training in 12 NGOs.

Guinea Bissau National Assembly: The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is working with the National Popular Assembly of Guinea Bissau to provide Legislative strengthening programs to the members of the Assembly. The NDI has provided training to 34 members of the Assembly. The aim of the training was to 1) enhance deputies' and their staff's understanding of their roles and responsibilities and enhance their oversight skills.

USAID/WA and the USAID/Washington Leland Initiative began its Connecting Civil Society program. The program's objective is to strengthen peace building; conflict recovery and transparency focused civil society networks.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

TSCTI: TSCTI expects to begin several additional activities in Chad and Niger in the next several months as well as put in place program managers in Niger.

Casamance Program: The phase III components of the Casamance project in Guinea Bissau are ending. In the next report, we will present highlights and lessons learned from these two programs in the Casamance border areas of Gambia and Guinea Bissau.

New Grant with ECOWAS: The Conflict Mitigation and Governance team expects to have a new Grant Agreement defining our relationship with ECOWAS. It is expected that we will continue to support ECOWAS' efforts in conflict early warning and prevention through assistance to civil society and its Observation and Monitoring Center.

ECOWARN: The recent evaluation of the efforts to date in developing a conflict early warning system, conducted by Dr. Howard Adelman, will be finalized shortly and summarized in our next newsletter.

Regional Advisors' Update

GDA Advisor

2006 Global Development Alliance (GDA) Annual Program Statement (APS) Successfully Completed
The 2006 GDA APS closed in mid-February with a

number of good proposals submitted to GDA from West African missions for an Incentive Fund grant.

USAID/Ghana's "Responsible Mining Alliance" was the first to receive notification of a GDA grant (\$400,000) to match the mission's \$850,000 investment in the project and the over \$7,000,000 in private sector resources. GDA and the Africa Bureau are still reviewing other proposals received.

African Cashew Alliance (ACA) Inaugurated

The ACA was launched at a meeting May 3-5 in Bissau, Guinea Bissau attended by nearly 60 representatives of the cashew sector from across Africa. Officers were elected, a series of action plans drawn up, and an MOU was drafted by those present. USAID/West Africa, the West Africa Trade Hub (WATH), and Olam International agreed to support a secretariat for the alliance. WATH, Kraft Foods, Inc. and various USAID missions have agreed to support a regional retail market assessment for retail packed cashew snacks.



Africa Cashew Alliance meeting; May, 2006

Kraft/Armajaro/GTZ in Sustainable Cocoa Alliance with USAID

The public-private partnership involving Kraft Foods Europe, Armajaro Trading Ltd and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) with the Rainforest Alliance, EDE, and the Sustainable Tree Crops Alliance (STCP) are working with USAID/West Africa on an innovative project to promote the production of sustainable and child-labor free cocoa in Cote d'Ivoire.

Mali Launches Mining Alliance

USAID/Mali, Morila Mining Inc. (a subsidiary of AngloAmerican Gold), and the Commune of Sanso (location of the Morila gold mine) have prepared an alliance which will cover the full spectrum of USAID/Mali's strategic objectives and that is a rare example of a local community's willingness to invest its own funds in an alliance project.

USAID/West Africa Support Kiafa Youth Center

Staff of USAID/West Africa have begun working with the Kiafa Youth Career Planning Center of the Buduburam Liberian Refugee Camp outside of Accra. Buduburam houses 42,000 Liberian refugees, many of whom have been in the camp since the early 1990's. USAID/West Africa staff is supporting the youth center on an agricultural project, fundraising, the renovation of new offices and classroom space, and a community radio project.

Regional Environmental Advisor (REA)

USAID/West Africa and USAID/Ghana developed a Global Development Alliance (GDA) agreement with the gold mining sector; collaborative efforts have paid off as the Ghana Mission was awarded \$400,000 to support an alliance with Newmont Mines and the South African company, GoldFields.

In collaboration with AFR/SD, USAID/WA organized an environmental training workshop in May 2006 for USAID personnel throughout Africa. USAID/WA is assisting the US Embassy Burkina Faso (BF) and NGO partners with an Environmental Assessment for the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) funded (USAID/West Africa managed) BRIGHT project (construction of rural girl's schools). The REA visited BF the week of May 2nd to assist with the assessment.

USAID/West Africa received biodiversity funds that will be used to start two regional trans-boundary natural resource management initiatives in 2006 that focus on sound resource use, local governance, transparency, income generation and conflict prevention. The REA recently facilitated team visits to Ghana that included the USAID funded Liberian Forestry Initiative and the CRSP soil management evaluation. The REA also met with and the Biodiversity and Business Offset Program (BBOP); Ghana and Uganda are "pilot countries" for BBOP, in Ghana BBOP is working with Newmont mines. Finally, the Plastic Waste Management Project



A cross-section of participants

(funded by USAID/West Africa), Africa LGS and EGAT Urban Office actively assisted the launching of the "Environmental Film Festival Week" in Accra; over 300 people participated in the 3-mile walk.

Enterprise Works manages the Plastic Waste Project in Accra, Lome and Niamey to promote micro-enterprise solutions to plastic waste issues.

Regional Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) – Dakar

The office continued monitoring the nutritional status and crop planting in vulnerable Sahelian countries in collaboration with the Dakar Food for Peace Office and the Famine Early Warning System Project. Joint visits

were made to Mauritania and Burkina Faso in June. There is growing concern that the rains have delayed in some areas, most notably in Niger, where crop yields may be compromised if the situation does not improve in July. OFDA is funding nutritional programs in Niger, food security and water initiatives in northern Mali, and has recently provided \$1.2 million to UNICEF in support of the regional Sahel nutritional program.

The USAID/WA FDA Advisor testified on the situation in the Sahel in early July to the International Development Select Committee of the House of Commons in England. The Committee is reviewing humanitarian responses to natural disasters. During a short visit to Liberia, She also conferred with UN Humanitarian Coordinators and NGOs in Monrovia and traveled to Nimba County to review projects and explore the potential sub-regional problem surrounding the property-right claims of the Mandingos, as they return to Nimba County from refugee camps.

In May, USAID/WA was represented in Germany to discuss contingency planning for Avian Flu and upcoming joint medical/military conference (MEDFLAG). In September 2006, MEDFLAG exercises will be held in Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana, and Benin.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- Brief EUCOM during their Dakar visit on OFDA's regional response mechanisms to disasters.
- Participate in a donors' meeting in Abidjan in late July to discuss future humanitarian operations in Cote d'Ivoire (CI), as it gets closer to the October 30 elections date. OFDA supports about \$2 million in humanitarian assistance in CI through U.N. agencies and NGOs.
- Sponsor training for Mission Disaster Relief Officers in embassies and USAID missions in West and North Africa in Dakar, August 16-18.
- In Liberia, USAID, in conjunction with WHO and the MOH, will sponsor health workshop, August 2-4 focused on transitioning from emergency assistance to development.
- The regional U.N. Consolidated Appeal workshop is set for September 11-12 in Dakar.
- Participate in MEDFLAG exercises in September.
- Continue monitoring agricultural and nutritional status in the Sahel.

Regional Food for Peace Office (RFFP) – Dakar

- Future program plans or Multi-Year Operational Programs (MYOP) were completed for Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania, and Niger. Approval of food shipments is expected to be signed by USAID/ Washington Director of FFP by September 1, 2006.
- PVO Consortium in Sierra Leone (CORAD) and the International Institute for Tropical (IITA) signed an MOU in May in which technicians from IITA-Benin were sent to Sierra Leone to train staff from CORAD and the Ministry of Agriculture on the use of biopesticides.
- RFFP office conducted a joint field visit in June, with Counterpart in several distribution centers to determine the cause of deterioration of Wheat Soya Blend (WSB). Storage conditions were not found to be the cause since other PVOs in other countries were also having spoilage problems with WSB. Corrective action is expected to follow.
- On a monitoring mission to Burkina Faso in February, FFP found that a partner was not following the exit strategy and recommended that the partner scale back the school feeding programs because of the high number of schools being assisted (over 1,600) and increase interventions in agricultural activities. Reports indicated that communities were greatly benefiting from small scale irrigated vegetable gardens and coping well with the last food crisis.
- The US Embassy in Mauritania requested FFP's support to evaluate the current food security situation and a potential food pipeline break due to underfunding of the World Food Program's (WFP) three-year Protracted Relief and Recovery Program (PRRO). In response, USAID/WA/RFFP led the joint assessment team to evaluate the prevailing food and nutritional security situation of vulnerable populations. RFFP identified urgent programmatic issues that could be addressed should resources become available and made recommendations on how to avoid any potential food security crisis in the future.

The USAID/West Africa Quarterly Newsletter provides our readers with news about activities and events taking place in our Mission. Please submit all comments and thoughts about our Newsletter to jcheema@usaid.gov and mquarcoo@usaid.gov.